



## 6. MANAGEMENT

A multi-use trail is a unique public facility because it blends two distinct purposes. On one hand, it is a non-motorized transportation corridor that in many respects must be managed like a street to assure user safety; on the other hand, it is also a greenway serving a variety of recreational user groups. Multi-use trails must also co-exist with property owners adjacent to the corridor, whose interests can be quite different from that of the trail users. Managing such a facility poses a unique challenge to the jurisdiction(s) owning it. For trails located on or adjacent to active rail lines, the need for effective management is significantly magnified.

Given the current active status of the Grand Junction Railroad, the path would be considered a rail-with-trail (RWT), defined as a multi-use trail located on or directly adjacent to an active railroad line (as opposed to a rail-to-trail, located on an abandoned rail line). For most such facilities, the development of a management plan represents a substantial commitment not only to the public, but also to the owner and/or operator of the rail line. With proper management practices in place, the trail may improve pre-existing conditions of trespass and conflict with rail operations.

The Grand Junction Trail would be considered a joint or “shared-use” facility, defined as a paved trail open to the general public for recreation and non-motorized transportation purposes in a corridor that primarily serves other transportation or utility functions. Virtually all paved multi-use trails in the United States are shared-use facilities between the general public and maintenance vehicles. Trails require their own maintenance, emergency access, and security vehicles. Although the Grand Junction Railroad is the most obvious shared use within the corridor, the trail would also be shared with existing utilities such as water, sewer, and electrical lines, as well as with maintenance vehicles.

The presence of the active rail line will be a dominant factor in the management and maintenance of the Grand Junction Trail. A RWT must be managed, operated, and maintained in a way that will a) protect the adjacent railroad infrastructure and operators; b) minimize costs to the railroad and to the trail managing entity; and c) maximize the enjoyment and safety of the public.

### **Responsibilities of the City of Cambridge**

It generally takes coordination and cooperation between different agencies and/or different jurisdictions to successfully operate and maintain a trail. The following represents the major responsibilities of a trail management agency:

- Overall coordination and guidance during trail development
- Organize, coordinate and implement the trail operations plan
- Establish trail user regulations
- Develop and implement a maintenance plan and assure adequate funding
- Monitor security/safety of the trail through routine inspections
- Oversee major maintenance and rehabilitation efforts
- Manage issues that may arise with properties abutting the trail corridor
- Act as the chief trail spokesperson with the public, including elected officials, and respond to the issues and concerns raised by trail users
- Preserve the linear integrity of the corridor and set the policy on non-trail uses of the corridor

## **Design Management**

It is helpful to adhere to established standards in trail design, signage, and maintenance. There are widely accepted standards or guidelines, such as the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities. Other practical measures include:

- Post warning signs for known hazards that are not easily eliminated
- Post and enforce trail regulations
- Enact a trail maintenance plan and maintain accurate records
- Maintain the trail to the level defined in the maintenance plan
- Inspect the trail regularly for hazards
- Promptly evaluate and address hazards and maintenance problems reported by trail users
- Ensure that there is adequate emergency access to the trail

These common sense precautions are indicative of good faith and responsible stewardship of the trail facility.

## **Operating the Grand Junction Trail - General Principles**

The operation of the Grand Junction Trail will be as important as its design, and will have a large impact on how the public perceives the trail as well as the agency that manages it. Operating a trail is

an on-going process that will require adjustments, since accumulated experience will dictate what does and does not work.

### ***Coordination of Operating Responsibilities and Procedures***

The first step for a trail manager is determining which agency, department, organization or person will be responsible for each of the activities involved in operating a trail. That means working with maintenance staff to determine a maintenance schedule and perform routine trail surface cleaning, working with the traffic operations division for sign replacement and intersection traffic control; and working with the police and fire departments for developing emergency response procedures. It means thinking about all the ways a trail interacts with the environment around it, and trying to anticipate in advance all the problems that may arise, and who would address them. In many cases, formal agreements between departments will be needed to assign responsibilities and determine who is responsible for which costs.

### ***Developing Trail Use Regulations***

The purpose of trail regulations is to promote user safety and enhance the enjoyment of all users. It is imperative that before the trail is opened, trail use regulations are developed and posted at trailheads and key access points. Trail maps and informational materials might include these regulations as well. Establishing that the trail facility is a regulated traffic environment just like other public rights of way is critical for compliance, and often results in a facility requiring minimal enforcement. Be sure to have an attorney review the trail regulations for consistency with existing ordinances and enforceability. In some locations, it may be necessary to pass additional ordinances to implement trail regulations.

Below is a sample of the most common items that should be covered in trail regulations:

- Hours of use
- Motorized vehicles, other than power-assisted wheelchairs, are prohibited
- Keep to the right except when passing
- Yield to on-coming traffic when passing
- Bicyclists yield to pedestrians
- Give a vocal warning when passing
- Pets must always be on short leashes
- Travel no more than two abreast
- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the trail
- Do not wander off of trail onto adjacent properties
- Do not stand in middle of trail when stopped
- Speed limit

